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ABSTRACT

The article discusses library services available for the blind and the physically handicapped at the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress and at regional libraries. Topics covered include conditions and eligibility for service, with talking book service provided for individuals who cannot read or use ordinary printed books and magazines because of physical limitations; extent and aspects of service, with an estimated 255,000 persons using the program in one form or another; selection of titles for talking books and braille, keeping in mind the financial reality that the average talking book costs $3,300; challenge and opportunity for the future programs; the human factor, which is demonstrated by letter selections of handicapped applicants; the large print revolution, said to be an ajunct to the national program; and other related developments such as the International Business Machines Corporation computer that is capable of translating straight text in English into braille at a potential rate of 55,000 words an hour; and notations of various sources useful to the visually and physically handicapped. (CB)

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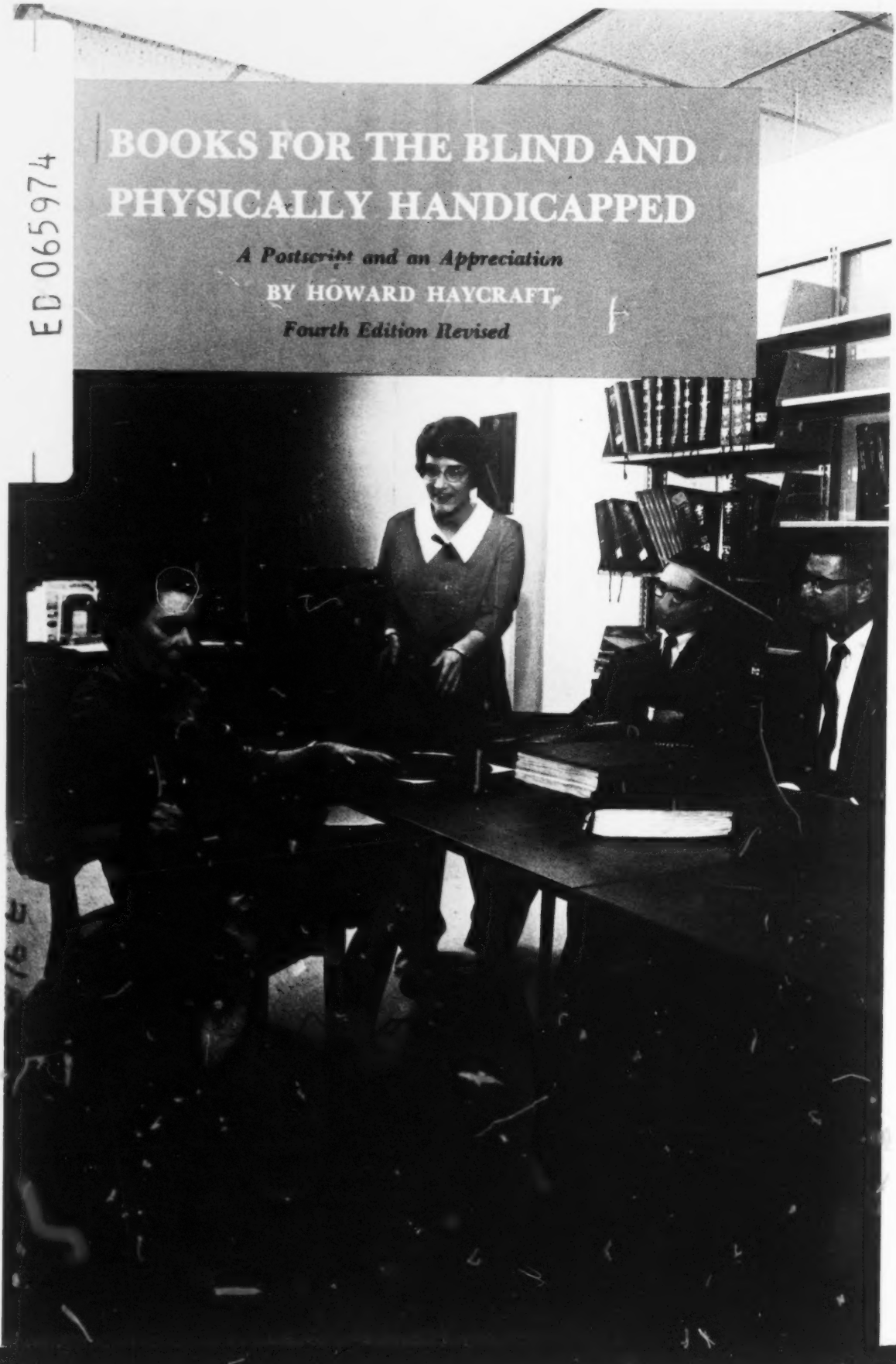
BOOKS FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

A Postscript and an Appreciation

BY HOWARD HAYCRAFT

Fourth Edition Revised



NOTE

The article which follows originally appeared in the *ALA Bulletin* for October 1962. With the kind permission of the American Library Association the present extensively revised and expanded Fourth Edition has been produced by The H. W. Wilson Company, for the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress, as a public service. Grateful acknowledgment is made (though space precludes individual mention) to the staffs of the numerous agencies and libraries who generously supplied material included in the following pages. . . . Additional copies of this pamphlet may be obtained, on request, from the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20542.

MILESTONES

IN NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

1829 Louis Braille invents the braille alphabet, making possible embossed books for the blind

1878 Thomas Alva Edison invents the phonograph

1904 Congress authorizes first, limited free mailing service to the blind

1931 Pratt-Smoot Act establishes centralized national free library service for adult blind readers, administered by the Library of Congress

1934 National books-for-the-blind program is enlarged to include talking book service at no cost to readers

1952 Pratt-Smoot Act is amended to delete the word "adult," thus permitting service both to adults and minors

1962 Public Law 87-765 establishes national lending library of musical scores and texts in Division for the Blind

1966 Congress enacts Public Laws 89-522 and 89-511, extending national books-for-the-blind service to all persons who are unable to read conventional printed materials because of physical or visual limitations. Division for the Blind adds "and Physically Handicapped" to title

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COVER PICTURE: Aided by a staff member, blind and partially sighted patrons enjoy their own service area (called the "Vision Section") in the Prince George's County Memorial Library, Hyattsville, Md.

"Listening to a tale being told in the dark
is one of the most ancient of
man's entertainments."—Moss Hart, *Act One*.

Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

A Postscript and an Appreciation by HOWARD HAYCRAFT

In 1931 Herbert Hoover occupied the White House and Stanley Kunitz (not yet a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet) was the young and imaginative editor of the *Wilson Bulletin for Librarians*.

On March 3, 1931, President Hoover signed the Pratt-Smoot Act which authorized the expenditure of $100,000 annually by the federal government to coordinate and expand library service for the blind on a national and regional basis. Concentrated at first on the provision of braille books for blind readers, the program today also includes talking books (books and magazines on records and cassettes), the machines on which to play them, open-reel tapes, and a variety of other services, supported by an annual appropriation in excess of $8,000,000. Furthermore, since 1966, the total program has been available by law to all persons who are unable to read conventional printed materials because of physical limitations, as well as to the legally blind.

But this is getting ahead of my story.

Back in 1931, Stanley Kunitz was one of the first to recognize the importance of the door which had been opened by the Pratt-Smoot Act, and he asked me if I would care to try my hand at an article for the *Wilson Bulletin* about this significant advance. I cared and I did. To assemble my facts, I interviewed Lucille A. Goldthwaite of the New York Public Library and corresponded extensively with Dr. Herman H. B. Meyer of the Library of Congress, which had been designated to administer the program and continues to do so today.

The finished article appeared in the February 1932 issue of the *Wilson Bulletin* under the title "The New Status of Library Work with the Blind." *Library Literature* and *Readers' Guide* confirm my recollection that it was the first discussion of the new program to appear in the library press, and possibly anywhere.

Thirty-odd years after these events I became a temporary legal user of talking books for periods of several months. On the basis of this experience it would be presumptuous of me to attempt to assess or even guess at the meaning of the program to the thousands of permanently blind and handicapped readers who are served by it. I can only say for myself that, under such circumstances, talking books would mean the difference between living and existing.

When I chanced to say this one day to David Clift, executive director of the American Library Association, and further told him of my 1932 *Wilson Bulletin* article, he urged me to write this postscript and appreciation. In doing so, I hope that I can contribute a little to a wider understanding

• *Mr. Haycraft, chairman of the board of The H. W. Wilson Company, publishers of indexes and reference works for libraries, is the well-known critic, anthologist, and historian of the detective story* (Murder for Pleasure, *etc.*). *In this article (now extensively revised and expanded) he tells something of his experiences and thoughts as a temporary user of the Books for the Blind program.*

of this remarkable program among librarians in general, and possibly through them to the even wider use of its benefits by the citizens, young and old, for whom it is provided.

Perhaps a good beginning might be through my own experience. In discussing this with librarian friends I have found them first of all interested in the everyday details. How do talking books compare with visual reading? Are some authors and types of books better suited to auditory reading than others? What about the narrators, the range of choice, the speed and adequacy of the service, the quality of the recordings? Here are some personal answers out of my limited experience.

Two possibly untypical factors influenced my choice of reading (by common consent of the users, talking books are "read," not "heard"). My experience was confined to periods of hospitalization and convalescence which, quite frankly, inclined me more to diversion than to planned reading. On the other hand, as a professional reader of fiction for many years, I found myself principally drawn to works of nonfiction I had been forced to miss.

The result was a mixed bag indeed. Here are a few, but by no means all, of the talking books I read and enjoyed, to illustrate some, but far from all, of the variety of experience available to the users: Moss Hart's *Act One*; Bishop's *The Day Lincoln Was Shot*; the weekly issues of *Newsweek*; Fadiman's *Party of One*, read by the author; Morton's *A Traveller in Rome*; Thurber's *The Years with Ross* and *Alarms and Diversions*; West's *The Devil's Advocate*; Patricia Collinge reading her Mr. and Mrs. Engle sketches from the *New Yorker*; Arnold Hano's *A Day in the Bleachers* (for die-hard New York Giant fans); Shaw's *Don Juan in Hell*, read by the First Drama Quartet; and assorted collections of poetry.

I have no apology for these choices, although under different circumstances I might try a heavier diet (or so I think). Incidentally, I did not ask for any mystery stories, because I had previously read all those available; however, I thought the selection of mystery titles discriminating and representative.

The late Robert Frost reading his own poetry for talking books in the Library of Congress Recording Studios. (LC photo)

The first and obvious difference an inveterate reader notices is the slower pace of auditory reading. This is not necessarily a bad thing, especially when the reader (in Thurber's phrase) is at right angles to his world. But a blind friend of mine, a young man going places and refusing to be slowed down, once told me that he regularly played his 16 rpm study records at 33 rpm. "It sounds like Donald Duck," he said, "but it saves my time." (In this connection I understand that several groups are experimenting with a kind of electronic shorthand, called "compressed speech," intended to speed up teaching records and tapes without distortion; while a variant, called "expanded speech," is designed to help slow or disadvantaged readers.) For recreational reading, however, the adjustment to the auditory pace is a minor one and quickly made.

With perhaps a single exception, all of the talking books I read were adequately narrated—or better. Readers frequently develop preferences for certain narrators and this sometimes influences their choice of titles; Alexander Scourby, Karl Weber, and Norman Rose became three of my special favorites. Some books, it seems to me, definitely gain in effectiveness by the auditory method. I can't imagine, for example, how visual reading of *The Day Lincoln Was Shot* could possibly attain the dramatic intensity of Karl Weber's narration on talking books. So, too, the sense of identification with the first person singular is greatly increased. When, shortly after reading *Act One* and *Alarms and Diversions* on talking

books, I heard of Moss Hart's death and then of Thurber's, it seemed in each case as if a valued personal friend had been taken. ("A tale told in the dark . . .")

Two categories of reading surprised me. With the exception of Thurber (who, after all, had many other qualities), it seemed to me that most humer failed to hold its own in the recorded form. Benchley and Don Marquis became suddenly dated and the E. B. White *Subtreasury of American Humor*, which I had remembered with pleasure from its first appearance in 1941, had somehow lost its fizz. On the other hand, poetry well recited was surprisingly rewarding to one who had never been able adequately to appreciate the form in print. But I suspect that these are subjective rather than typical reactions.

The physical service of talking books (which in my case came by mail from the New York Library for the Blind, a branch of the New York Public Library) I found excellent. The post-free cartons containing the records reached me, on the average, two days after leaving the library, even during the Christmas rush. Because of the limited number of copies of any recording, each reader is asked to give the supplying library a list of up to forty desired titles at a time; frequently the lists are prepared by the library staff, at the reader's request. To assure a continuous flow of service he is usually sent two titles at the start, and when he returns a recording the next available title on his list is mailed to him promptly, usually the same day. A borrower is allowed to retain book titles for a maximum of four weeks, magazines for a shorter time. As might be expected, there are waiting lists for the newer and more popular books, just as in ink-print libraries. Occasionally two short books of similar nature (*e.g.*, two mysteries, two sports books) are packaged in a single container, thus expediting shipping and handling.

As a rule the quality of the recordings was good-to-superior. Some of the older titles inevitably betrayed traces of surface wear, but in no case did I have any serious listening difficulty. Each individual record, incidentally, has two labels; a braille label on one side and a printed label on the other.

Conditions and Eligibility for Service

The question I have been asked most often concerns eligibility to receive materials under the program. Prior to 1966 the service was confined to the certified "legally" blind, as determined by a rather rigid set of criteria under the Pratt-Smoot Act. However, passage by Congress in 1966 of Public Law 89-522 extended the service "to other physically handicapped readers certified by competent authority as unable to read normal printed material as a result of physical limitations, under regulations prescribed by the Librarian of Congress for this service." In this connection it may be helpful to quote the statement prepared and currently in use by the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress:

> Talking book service is provided for individuals who cannot read or use ordinary printed books and magazines because of physical limitations. Examples of such limitations are impaired eyesight or other malfunction of the eyes, the inability to hold a book or to turn pages, the inability to hold printed material steadily enough to read it, etc.
>
> Any of the above conditions must be certified by competent authority. Ophthalmologists, optometrists, or doctors of medicine can certify as to visual disability. Doctors of medicine in the fields of other severe physical disabilities are preferred as certifying authorities when available. Other acceptable certifying authorities are as follows: heads of agencies or state chapters of agencies; registered nurses; professional staff of hospitals, rehabilitation centers, institutions and homes, the professional staff of health and welfare agencies and similar persons associated with reputable private agencies; professional librarians knowledgeable of a community or of residents remote from other facilities; and educators. The Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is responsible for resolving doubtful instances of eligibility.

The name "talking books" is believed to have originated with Robert B. Irwin (1883-1951). Blind himself from childhood, Irwin was for almost 50 years a dynamic leader in all aspects of work with the blind. He was for many years executive director of the American Foundation for the Blind, the initiator and first manager of the talking books recording studios of the AFB, and is generally considered the individual most responsible for the passage of the Pratt-Smoot Act and other important legislation for the blind. Talking books, incidentally, were the first LP recordings, preceding the commercial variety so prevalent today by almost 15 years.

Nursing homes, hospitals, institutions and schools may also borrow a talking book machine, and recordings of books and magazines, for the use of their patients, residents and students who cannot read ordinary printed material because of physical or visual limitations. The conditions must be certified to, in the case of nursing homes, hospitals, institutions and schools, by the administrator, operator, superintendent, principal, physicians or registered or visiting nurses.

Upon acceptance under these conditions, the applicant will be sent on loan, post-free and free of charge, a talking book or cassette machine; and he will be entitled to borrow, post-free and free of charge, talking books and cassettes, braille books, or books on open-reel tape (of which more later) according to his needs. At present writing these services are provided to certified readers by 51 regional libraries and 76 machine lending agencies.[1]

To explain the workings of this program to potential users, the Division has prepared a concise and attractive informational brochure, entitled *Reading Is For Everyone* —including a detachable postage-paid certification application card addressed to the Division. Upon receipt of the card in the Division it will be forwarded to the regional or sub-regional library serving the reader's area.

In the conviction that there are few more effective channels than libraries for informing those who are legally entitled to receive the benefits of this program, *I should like to urge every library of whatever type in the United States and its insular possessions to write for this brochure* in quantity; *to publicize its availability; and to keep stocks of it permanently on hand. Address: Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20542 and ask for copies of "Reading Is For Everyone."*

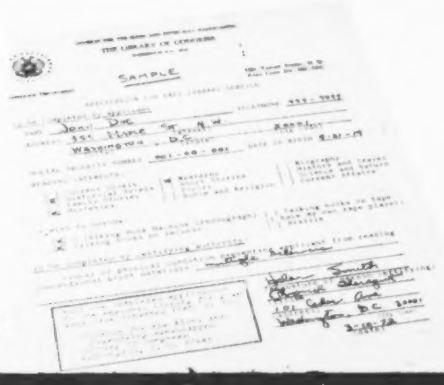
To this I should like to add a special plea to hospital librarians to be ready to step in with appropriate help and information for the newly or temporarily blind or handicapped at this most crucial time. It is easy to assume that this is somebody else's job—except that all too often it isn't.

But please don't let this last observation give you the erroneous idea—held by many laymen and even by some librarians—that library work with the blind and physically handicapped is primarily concerned with hospitals and institutional services. On the contrary, a national survey prior to 1966 disclosed that only 5½ per cent of all legally blind readers were found in hospitals or institutions, including schools for the blind. While it is yet too early to assess the full impact of P.L. 89-522—extending the service to other types of handicapped readers—it is conservatively estimated that *no more than 10% of all eligible readers are in institutions of any type.* Thus the other 90% might be described as typical public library users with the same needs, tastes, and desires as sighted readers in similar age groups—but without their advantages.

Extent and Aspects of Service

Figures compiled recently showed that over 206,000 readers were using talking books, while more than 22,000 were registered borrowers of braille. New readers are being added to the program at the rate of approximately 2,000 a month. While the largest number of these are visually or physically handicapped persons, it is interesting to note that the publicity given to P.L. 89-522 and 89-511 has also substantially

Typical certification on behalf of a handicapped applicant. Application blanks for individuals and institutions are available from the Division or the regional libraries.



[1] By related legislation (P.L. 89-511, also passed in 1966) Congress amended and extended Title IV-B of the Library Services and Construction Act to provide means for establishing library service at the state level to the physically handicapped where it does not exist, and to improve those services already in operation.

accelerated the registration of legally blind readers not previously reached by the program.

In the federal fiscal year 1970-71, 700 titles were recorded as talking books and 275 were issued in press braille; total titles now available in the two forms are about 4,000 and 7,400 respectively. (Talking books wear out, physically, faster than braille.) A talking book costs an average of $3,300 for an edition of 700 copies; a press braille book costs about $1,100 for an edition of 70 copies. The specially designed electrical multi-speed record players cost the government about $38 per machine in quantities of several thousand. A few battery-operated players have been acquired for readers who do not have access to electricity.

In addition, well over 4,000 books of specialized interest are also available, recorded on standard open-reel or cassette tape. Open-reel tape is a supplementary service, available only to readers who have their own tape players. At this writing, more than 20,000 persons are taking advantage of this opportunity to read in depth along lines of their personal interests or requirements.

Thus the total number of users of the program in all forms is currently close to the 255,000 mark as nearly as can be estimated.

In addition to press braille, an important phase of the program is the transcribing by volunteers of hand-produced braille books in single copies or very small editions to meet special needs. The coordination of this program (which has existed for nearly half a century) including the training and certification of volunteers, is a responsibility of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, which last year certified over 500 volunteer transcribers. Some 2,500 of the volunteer transcribers, incidentally, belong to the National Braille Association, Inc., which sponsors annual conferences and workshops under expert guidance.

Another volunteer activity relates to the repair and maintenance of the record and cassette players supplied to the users. The Telephone Pioneers of America is a volunteer organization of senior telephone industry employees who spend their leisure hours repairing and restoring talking book and cassette machines. Many of the Pioneers are also dedicated braille transcribers. Chapters of this organization are functioning today in the repair of machines in practically all of the fifty states, and it is estimated that since 1960 some 3,600 Pioneers have repaired more than 150,000 machines.

A youthful braille reader and her book. (American Printing House for the Blind photo)

Volunteers, in fact, have played an indispensable role in library service for the blind for almost a hundred years, and today more than a score of philanthropic and nonprofit organizations continue to augment the national program in valuable ways. For a description of their activities, together with a quick reference list, see the booklet, *Volunteers With Vision,* which is available on request from the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. In addition to these continuing efforts, special projects are frequently underwritten by individual organizations or institutions. The *World Book Encyclopedia* in braille, made possible by the publisher, is a case in point.

A largely-volunteer activity which supplements the older programs is the recording on magnetic tape, previously mentioned, of a growing list of scholarly titles. In 1971 the Division trained 100 tape readers who volunteer their services in producing books on open-reel and cassette tape. To quote

from the classified catalog *Books on Open-Reel Tape* (available from the Division on request):

> The use of open-reel magnetic tape to record books was introduced into the Library of Congress national reading program in 1958-59. The [then] Division for the Blind began selecting book titles for taping which augmented the talking book, or microgroove record program, and which served a useful purpose for students and those working in the professions.
>
> Ten years later, a successful pilot program on cassette machines and closed-reel tape persuaded Division planners that the cassette furnished the tape format for the future. The decision was made to continue using open-reel tape as masters, while reproduction and national distribution to readers would be on the cassette.

A selection of the many newly recorded titles on cassettes are listed in the current issues of the Division's bimonthly magazine *Talking Book Topics* (to be discussed later) as rapidly as they are produced, and a separate catalog of cassette titles already issued, *Cassette Books,* is available on request.

Preparation of selected reading lists has also long been a function of the Division. Some typical lists recently issued include *Talking Books to Profit By, Talking Books for Younger Readers, Convalescing With Talking Books, Football in Fact and Fiction,* and *Talking Books for Music Lovers.* A complete list of such publications is available from the Division on request.

Certain other publications reflect the close liaison between the Division and the library profession, as represented chiefly by the American Library Association. Of major significance is *Standards for Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped,* officially adopted by ALA and published in large type at $1.75 by the American Library Association, 50 East Huron St., Chicago, Ill. 60611. Perhaps quotation of a few sentences will illustrate why it is important that libraries of all types should own these *Standards* and consult them frequently:

> Responsibility for blind and . . . handicapped readers does not stop at federal and state levels. . . . Every kind of library should make a special effort to include blind and . . . handicapped people in all the services provided for sighted patrons. . . . It is the aim of these principles and standards to provide a guide for librarians, trustees . . . , government officials, and interested citizens, that they may evaluate the library services now rendered to the blind and . . . handicapped and plan wisely for wider and more effective service.

Librarians would also do well to familiarize themselves with the activities and publications of the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped, which was established in 1967. Of special interest and value is the booklet *Standards for Production of Reading Materials for the Blind and Visually Handicapped,* published at $1.50 in 1970 and available from the Council at 79 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016; also available in braille to qualified borrowers from the Division and its regional libraries.

From 1931 to 1952 the federal program was limited by law to adult blind readers. In the latter year the act was amended to delete the word "adult," and since that date the Division has worked closely with an advisory committee composed of leading specialists in library work with children and young people.

In 1962 the Division announced an important innovation in its service to blind children—the recording of talking books at 16 rpm on 10-inch discs, as contrasted with the standard 12-inch disc recorded at 33 rpm which had been used for so many years. To quote the *LC Information Bulletin,* "The 16 rpm records will give 45 minutes of recording time to each side of a record. Physically, talking books for blind children will thus be smaller in diameter and lighter in weight. They will also be more economical to produce, so that more copies of more titles can be made available."

This important development has been subsequently extended to the entire program and today all talking book titles, whether juvenile or adult, are recorded in the new format, with the gains described.

The success and advantage of 16 rpm recordings have naturally led to exploration of 8 rpm as a practical recording speed. All talking book magazines in the program are now recorded at 8 rpm, and this speed may be used to record books in the future.

Selecting Titles for Talking Books and Braille

But fascinating as such technological developments are, the most challenging job in the Division (and, I should think, the most intriguing to librarians) is the selection of the titles to be recorded or put into braille. Imagine, if you can, the responsibility of selecting current and replacement titles for 200,000 or more avid borrowers at an average cost of $3,300 per talking book title. At such costs it will be apparent that the books selected for recording or transcribing are necessarily those which will meet wide reader preference.

Implicit in the whole matter of book selection is the principle that the interests of blind and physically handicapped readers and their reading tastes are substantially the same as those of sighted readers, with the same needs for variety and balance. To quote from the Division's statement on book selection policy:

> The selection of books for the blind and physically handicapped follows practically the same procedures as does the selection of books for readers of all ages, interests and abilities, with certain modifications imposed by the peculiar media of communication involved. As a consequence the collections to be developed are comparable (within the limitation of available funds for purchase) to those being developed for clientele of public libraries serving a wide range of readers.

Actual selection of titles is performed by experienced professional librarians in the Division, advised by the committee for children's books previously mentioned, several young adult librarians throughout the nation, regional librarians, blind and sighted persons closely connected with work for the blind and physically handicapped, and subject specialists within the Library of Congress. Since the passage of P.L. 89-522 a number of national and local agencies for various types of the handicapped (some of which will be named later in this article) have provided a valuable "feedback" to the selection staff, just as organizations for the blind have done in the past and continue to do. While occasional titles—such as Robert Russell's *To Catch an Angel* and Julietta K. Arthur's *Employment for the Handicapped*—are obvious and almost mandatory selections, many others require considerable discussion with advisory groups before adoption. A recent development reflecting changing needs is the recording of at least one Spanish language title per month to add to a collection for certified readers whose first language is Spanish. An annotated bilingual list of talking books and magazines recorded in Spanish is available from the Division; entitled *Libros Parlantes* it contains a "sound sheet" in Spanish.

(Incidentally, a recent reader-interest survey revealed that almost 50 percent of all users of the program are aged 60 or over.)

In the selection process standard book review and preview media are used, but all books are also carefully examined by the staff, who also do the cataloging and annotations for the two bimonthly publications, *Talking Book Topics* and *Braille Book Review*, which are produced and distributed to users of the program for the Library of Congress by the American Foundation for the Blind. These are supplemented by biannual cumulated catalogs. Arrangement of titles in these publications is by broad subject areas. A portion of each year's budget is earmarked for re-recording and transcribing older titles which have been worn out through use—here again the analogy to the public library is evident.

In a recent development, the ink editions of both *Talking Book Topics* and *Braille Book Review* are produced in enlarged type for the benefit of partially sighted users. The editorial content of both the print and braille editions contain articles and book news of special interest to blind and handicapped readers. Responding to the suggestions of many readers, the Division now inserts in each issue of *Talking Book Topics* a "sound sheet"—a thin plastic 8 rpm recording of the new book announcements.

For practical and educational reasons the braille and talking book programs are complementary, each performing a useful and needed function. But because it would be obviously uneconomical to duplicate any large number of titles in both forms, the selection staff is faced constantly with deciding which medium to use. Two factors

are helpful in this situation: the circumstance that certain types of books have been shown by experience to be better suited to one medium or the other, and the fact that an increasing number of braille readers today are also talking book users.

Experience, in fact, plays a major role in the whole gamut of book selection. Periodic reader-interest surveys conducted by the Division bring an amazingly large and always helpful response. Not surprisingly, blind and handicapped readers are also articulate correspondents, and careful attention is paid to their letters—which range from "The worst book I ever read!" to "I have always wanted to take a postgraduate course. Thank you for giving it to me." Despite the time-consuming steps involved in arriving at the finished product, it is a source of pride to the selection staff that when the best-of-the-year lists (such as ALA's "Notable Books") appear, a great number of the titles included, as well as many current bestsellers, have been selected for the program and most of them are already in circulation.

Copyright clearance is another of the functions performed by the Division, but today this presents relatively little difficulty. From the author's point of view, both Mrs. Haycraft and I can testify that there is scarcely a more rewarding experience a writer can have than to learn that a book of his is wanted for the program, and this I understand is the typical reaction of most publishers and authors.

In addition to books, magazines play an important part in the program. Among general and popular periodicals circulated on talking books or in braille (or occasionally both) are *Reader's Digest, Ladies' Home Journal, Newsweek, Atlantic, Harper's, American Heritage, National Geographic, Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, Good Housekeeping, Holiday, Horizon, Sports Illustrated, Selecciones* (the Spanish language edition of *Reader's Digest*), *Jack and Jill, Seventeen, New Braille Musician, Popular Mechanics, True,* and *Farm Journal.* There are also a number of magazines (chiefly in braille) addressed specifically to blind readers and their problems. Available through the supplementary tape program—which as we have seen emphasizes a somewhat more specialized selection—are such periodicals as *Foreign Affairs, Personnel and Guidance Journal, Social Work, The Writer,* and *QST.* In all, more than 70 magazines are available to users of the program in the several forms.

Three principal presses produce books and magazines in press braille under contract with the government: American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville; Clovernook Printing House for the Blind, Cincinnati; and Howe Press of the Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, Massachusetts. The two principal recorders and manufacturers of talking books are the American Foundation for the Blind, New York, and the American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville.

(College and school texts—not strictly speaking a part of the program but closely related to it—are produced on tape by the more than 20 nationwide units of Recording for the Blind, Inc. which maintains national headquarters, and a library housing the largest single collection of recorded educational books anywhere in the world, at 215 East 58th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022. At this writing something in excess of 15,000 individual textbooks and related materials are available to qualified students free on loan from this valuable source. Full information and catalogs of available materials may be obtained by addressing RFB at the address given above.)

Narrators of talking books, many of them radio and television professionals, are selected and paid by the recording studios, although the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped can and frequently does make suggestions with regard to specific titles. The tape-recording program is largely the work of volunteer organizations using volunteer narrators, as is the college and school text program.

The Future—Challenge and Opportunity

Nearly all the foregoing information, condensed as it necessarily must be, came to me from various helpful staff members (too numerous to identify personally, much as I should like to) of the Division for the

Blind and Physically Handicapped and of a number of the regional libraries. I am surely not the first visitor to observe the unusual concern for the individual reader which pervades the people working in this program, whether at the national or regional level—unusual even in so dedicated a profession as librarianship. If ever a library program had "heart" this is it! Nor, I may add, is this a one-way street. In few aspects of library work, it is evident, is there so personal and rewarding a relationship between librarian and reader.

For many years in the past these dedicated workers in the Books for the Blind program were troubled by their inability—under existing laws—to serve that even larger segment of the public who are not legally blind, yet are unable to read conventional print because of a variety of physical and visual handicaps. They were not alone in this concern, which was shared by various agencies for the handicapped and by a number of thoughtful legislators. Suddenly, dramatically, the desired breakthrough came in 1966 when Congress passed, and the President signed, P.L. 89-522 extending the service to persons unable to read conventional print because of physical and visual limitations.

Obviously, this breakthrough presented challenges as well as opportunities at all levels. Therefore, in preparing this Fourth Revised Edition of this pamphlet, it seemed imperative to me to revisit the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (as it is now designated) and to talk with and listen to as many regional librarians, state librarians, agency representatives, and others as possible, at meetings of the American Library Association's Round Table on Library Services to the Blind and elsewhere. The paragraphs which follow will represent, to the best of my ability, a synthesis of what I have learned about the expanded program; together with references to other recent developments in the field (the large print "revolution," etc.).

I have already referred, in earlier paragraphs, to the increased role of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, in Washington, in supplying talking books and machines to the non-blind physically handicapped residing in states which for various reasons have not as yet been able to take full advantage of the expanded program. By fortunate coincidence the Division moved in 1967 from its outgrown and scattered quarters, in the Library of Congress and elsewhere, into a spacious and adaptable building in northwest Washington, where its varied and complex operations can be carried on under one roof (and on which roof, incidentally, those of the staff who drive to work can park their cars thus solving another perennial and crucial Washington problem).

Typical of physically handicapped readers is Michael R_____, 8½ years, 23 pounds, a victim of Amyotonia Congenita (lack of muscles), shown here with his treasured talking book machine. (Free Library of Philadelphia photo)

For efficiency the more than 90 staff members are organized in eleven operational units, ranging according to their needs and work loads from as few as two persons to almost 25. The largest of these units is known as the National Collections for the Blind and Physically Handicapped which functions as a regional library for the District of Columbia and serves as a national resource for specialized material unavailable in regional libraries.

Not surprisingly, the heaviest physical load resulting from the implementation of P.L. 89-522 has fallen on the National Collections and on the Field Services Section; yet its impact has been felt by virtually every unit, from Selection and Publications to the Technical Section. Especially has the Office of the Chief been involved in new and mutually beneficial relations with a variety of national and local organizations

for the non-blind handicapped, including by way of illustration (but by no means limited to) such agencies as the Muscular Dystrophy Associations of America, the Arthritis Foundation, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc., and a host of others at the local level. It would be impossible to overestimate the enthusiasm of such organizations for the P.L. 89-522 program—or their value in bringing news of the availability of the program to its potential clientele through their state and local chapters. Valuable help and guidance has been provided also by the departments of rehabilitation in many of the states and, as well, by the Division of Library Programs of the U.S. Office of Education.

An interesting, perhaps logical, by-product of P.L. 89-522 and 89-511 has been the recent establishment of regional libraries for the blind and physically handicapped in states which did not have them previously. Although some of these were in the planning stage earlier, these laws added impetus to the trend. Certainly the advantages of such a trend in reaching the maximum number of beneficiaries of the program would seem to be manifest, and already many state libraries and state library commissions have demonstrated ingenuity and imagination in reaching citizens who are entitled to receive these services.

In the belief that in many instances blind and handicapped readers would benefit by physical access to library services at the local level, the Division has also encouraged the development of collections of braille and talking books and related materials in selected city, county, and school libraries in various parts of the nation. These "subregionals" are, in essence, offshoots of the regional libraries and are created and directed by them. The Division cooperates by providing additional copies of books when necessary. Often in the participating local libraries rooms are provided where the readers may listen to books and magazines and otherwise "browse" just as non-handicapped patrons do (see cover photo). For further information about this "sub-regional" network, as it has become known, inquiries should be addressed to the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress in Washington.

This is not to suggest that all libraries could or should render this type of service. However, every library can and should become an information or referral center—a bridge between the national program and the individuals entitled to its benefits.

Prior to the enactment of P.L. 89-522, the number of legally blind persons, and therefore the potential audience for this program, in the U.S. was estimated at approximately 500,000. Of this number about 100,000, or 20 per cent, were regular borrowers of talking books or braille or both—a respectable batting average in any library league. It is estimated that today the Division's program has a potential audience of 2,000,000 readers, resulting from passage of P.L. 89-522. How successfully and how soon this new clientele can be informed of its eligibility to be served may well depend on the degree and extent of cooperation given by libraries at the local level. One activity strongly suggested is liaison between the local librarian and state, regional, or local chapters of organizations for the handicapped, and with local service clubs; in addition to the obvious need for constant availability of informational materials such as the brochure, *Reading Is For Everyone.*

At the Division itself, a variety of activities and experiments, technological and otherwise, is constantly going on to enable the program better to serve the expanded

. . . even the smallest library . . .

"This type of service to a community or area is one that even the smallest library can institute, for it puts no strain on the budget. It consists simply of getting the information together and publicizing its availability. The staff is also available to write the first letter from a blind or handicapped person to an agency that can help him—since the mere mechanics of getting a letter off might keep some from taking advantage of available services."—*Mrs. Leola M. Millar, librarian, Free Public Library, Rolla, Missouri.*

clientele. To mention just one by way of illustration: the Technical Section has already made possible the provision of electronic devices, operated either directly or by remote control, to enable handicapped readers to turn their talking book machines on and off without the assistance of others. Whether an automatic record-changer can someday be added to the service provided is also the subject of much consideration.

For those readers interested in further exploration in depth and detail, an especially comprehensive and valuable overview of all aspects of the program will be found in Robert Bray's article "Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library Service" in Volume 2 of the *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, edited at the University of Pittsburgh and published by Marcel Dekker, New York and London.

The Human Factor

While workers in the program at all levels have long been accustomed to (and heartened by) extensive correspondence with blind readers, they were scarcely prepared for the veritable flood of mail induced by the extension of the service to other types of handicapped persons under P.L. 89-522. Here are a few extracts selected at random from the hundreds of letters on file at the Division, written by, or more often for, handicapped applicants.

From a teacher of the homebound:

I am hoping to procure your help for two boys who have been victims of Muscular Dystrophy since the ages of two and three. They attended public school through the third and fourth grades. Since that time they have been under the instruction of the _____ County Homebound Teacher. The boys are brothers, age 16 and 14. They are in wheel chairs, but cannot even manipulate their chairs. They cannot lift a book or turn pages in books. These boys are of average intelligence and have a reading and comprehension ability of Junior High School. The Talking Books would be of great benefit to them.

From a librarian:

I am at present hospitalized at _____ Rehabilitation Center. I am a complete quadriplegic, which prohibits the use of my hands and am, therefore, unable to get adequate reading. Prior to my accident in 1965 I was an assigned teacher librarian, and have my Master's Degree in Library Science. Would you please forward a list of available literature both fiction and non-fiction, on tape and records? Also, do you furnish equipment for the use of these tapes and records?

Robert S. Bray (left), chief, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, is interviewed by the author of this article. (ALA photo)

And this, from the above applicant's physician:

Mrs. _____ _____ has been quadriplegic since an automobile accident in 1965. Since that time she has spent the majority of her time in various hospitals and rehabilitation centers. Physical rehabilitation is only part of any extensive rehabilitation program. We feel that Mrs. _____ needs intellectual stimulation and, due to her handicap, find it difficult to provide her with the type of materials she needs. Any help that you can provide for her will be appreciated.

From Sister _____, a staff member of a convalescent and rest home:

I would like to apply for the loan of disc recordings and talking book machines. Our residents are of all types, mostly elderly. A good number have impaired eyesight, malfunction of the eyes, or are unable to hold a book or turn its pages. Several residents have multiple sclerosis, or Parkinson's, or rheumatoid arthritis to an advanced degree. The use of talking books will be a great aid to keeping their interest up to date and their minds clear and alert.

A thank-you note from a naturalized citizen:

I returned home Monday from the hospital and found the record player. Words just fail me to express my gratitude. I thank you sincerely for your kindness to me. I also thank the good Lord for giving me the foresight when I was quite young to come to this wonderful country of ours and become a part of it.

And one more:

When one receives a gift for one's birthday . . . nice but not earth shaking news. BUT when one receives a gift with a KEY ATTACHED that will unlock a door to a whole new way of life. . . . THIS IS NEWS! ! ! And to you who were responsible for this delightful surprise. . . . Thank you, Thank you . . . for my beautiful new TALKING BOOK MACHINE.

The Large Print Revolution

Although books in large print for the partially sighted are not officially a part of the national program, they are an invaluable adjunct to it. Published today by almost two score of publishers and organizations, and purchased widely (if not as widely as they should be!) by regional, public, and school libraries, they are a boon as well to thousands of readers with lesser disabilities.

The prime source of information about large print books is undoubtedly the catalog of *Large Type Books in Print*, edited by Robert A. Landau and Judith S. Nyren and published in 1970 by the R. R. Bowker Company, 1180 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036 at $11.95, listing 1,200 titles available in large type together with a directory of the publishers from whom they may be obtained. It is not too much to urge libraries of all types and sizes to acquire this invaluable volume, to earmark a portion of each year's budget for the purchase of large print books, and periodically to request updated listings of such materials from the individual publishers.

Libraries which are unable for any reason to acquire the Bowker volume may apply without charge to the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Washington for the periodically revised reference circular *Reading Materials in Large Type*, listing the names and addresses of more than 35 publishers producing large type materials.

Although space does not permit the listing here of all the publishers of large print materials, it may nevertheless be helpful to name a few of the largest producers of general fiction and non-fiction in this form, from whom catalogs are available on request. They are:

Keith Jennison Books (a division of Franklin Watts, Inc.), 845 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022, with a list approaching 200 titles.

Ulverscroft Large Print Books, F. A. Thorpe, Ltd., Leicester, England; address all inquiries to the American representative: Oscar B. Stiskin, P.O. Box 3055, Stamford, Conn. 06905. In 1971 Ulverscroft published its 500th large print title; and in 1969 Mr. Frederick A. Thorpe received the Order of the British Empire from the Queen for his contribution in establishing the Ulverscroft series.

And G. K. Hall & Co., 70 Lincoln Street, Boston, Mass. 02111 and Large Print, Ltd., 505 Pearl Street, Buffalo, N.Y. 14202 have recently released extensive lists of large print books, with emphasis on current and best-selling titles; catalogs on request.

Established earlier, but concentrating chiefly on large type materials for the school age, is the volunteer National Aid to the Visually Handicapped, 3201 Balboa Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94121.

It may also be useful to mention that both the *Reader's Digest* and *New York Times* (weekly) issue large type editions; inquiries should be addressed to these publications.

Other Developments

That the Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped program is not static, but under wise leadership in many areas is constantly growing, constantly improving the scope and caliber of its services is gratifyingly shown by a number of developments since this article was first printed. Many of these have been indicated by updated references in the foregoing text. Certain others are summarized below.

Harold Russell, chairman of The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, enjoys a Keith Jennison Large Type Edition.

• An important milestone in the area of press braille was the announcement by the American Printing House for the Blind and the International Business Machines Corporation of a gift by the latter of an IBM 709 computer, capable of translating straight text in English into braille at a potential rate of 55,000 words an hour. In addition to the obvious advantages of reducing preparation time of press braille books from weeks to days, the system when fully operative is expected to release highly trained personnel for the production of additional needed materials of a more difficult and specialized nature. The first completely computer-produced braille title was published early in 1968. IBM also announced the availability in mid-1968 of the first electrically-powered braille typewriter, specially priced to schools and government agencies.

• In October 1962 Public Law 87-765 established a circulating and reference library of musical scores and instructional texts for the blind in the Library of Congress. Since that date the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has acquired copies of all known press braille scores here and abroad, a total of 25,000 volumes, or approximately 75,000 titles, which have been processed and prepared for circulation to blind musicians. The Division has also developed a comprehensive program for training volunteer transcribers in the intricacies of braille music notation in order to fill gaps in the press braille collection and to provide for special needs of users.

• Among recent developments in the national program may be mentioned increasingly close cooperation between the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and such other governmental agencies as the Food and Drug Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Labor Department, and Department of Agriculture. Publications and reports of such agencies are being provided in braille or recorded form, and at times financed by the agencies themselves. The full Warren Report—for example—was ordered in talking book form on the day it was released, and the Summary was equally promptly put into press braille. Both forms were completed and released to libraries in less than six weeks. More recently the Federal income tax form has been reproduced in braille and is distributed to blind readers by the Division.

• In 1972 the Division issued two concise and highly valuable publications: *Sources of Reading Materials for the Blind and Physically Handicapped*, listing principal sources (on loan or for rent or purchase) of spoken word records, periodicals, open-reel and cassette tapes, related equipment, and large type materials; and *Sources of Braille Materials for the Visually Handicapped*, listing braille materials for loan or purchase. At least one copy of each would seem indispensable in libraries of all sizes and types as a resource manual.

• In a further effort to extend reference service to blind and physically handicapped readers at the local level, the publishers of the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* have responded to a suggestion of the Division and are now indicating by an appropriate symbol, in both the abridged and unabridged editions, those indexed periodicals which are available on talking books, in braille, or on tape. A total of 28 periodicals are so indicated.

• To be noted also is the Catalog of Volunteer-Produced Textbooks, a centralized card-index established and maintained by the

American Printing House for the Blind, 1839 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville 40206, now numbering more than 30,000 entries from all sources. One of the valuable functions of this catalog is to serve as a clearinghouse, to promote the flow of materials and to avoid unnecessary duplication. In 1967 the Catalog became an integral unit of a newly established Instructional Materials Center at the Printing House, a descriptive brochure of which is available on request.

• I have mentioned earlier the human concern for the individual reader which seems to characterize all levels of library service for the blind and physically handicapped. This was brought home to me again forcefully—and touchingly—when I recently visited the Division in Washington and discovered, in the National Collection's circulation department, a section of worn books embossed in the all-but-forgotten "Moon" type (an early rival of braille). I was further told that only a handful of Moon-borrowers survive in the U.S. today, but that the collection will be maintained as long as even one reader remains to use it. Need I say that this is a concept of library service too often lost sight of in these hectic days?

• On October 3, 1967, at a special ceremony attended by over 100 persons, President Johnson signed amendments to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act which included a provision to establish a National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults. To quote the magazine *Performance* (published by The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped) for February 1968: "The program will undoubtedly begin slowly and develop gradually. In the meantime, however, services to deaf-blind persons throughout the nation will be developing. While a great deal has been accomplished for the deaf-blind, the need for a complete national service has been the hope of professionals for some time." Books in braille, it may be mentioned, are the only source of reading for this group. For latest information, address the National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, 101 Fifth Ave., New Hyde Park, N.Y. 11040.

• In the field of children's books the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has recently introduced two new special formats which have received favorable response. One involves the inclusion of the print edition of a picture book in the container with the talking book edition. For physically handicapped or partially sighted children these book-record combinations can help to reinforce learning and enhance appreciation of the recorded text. Also, for blind children some books are provided with braille and print text and illustrations on facing pages. These books enable a sighted parent or teacher to read along with the child; or a blind parent can read to sighted children. A few of these braille titles, called Scratch 'n Sniff books, have an added feature: they contain fragrance labels which release their scents when the reader scratches the labels with his fingernail. "Thus," says a Division for the Blind staff member, "a child reading *Little Bunny Follows His Nose* is treated to an aroma of strawberries and then pickles!"

• Also encouraging, in a more general sense, is the increasing public awareness of the problems of the blind and handicapped, as evidenced by accounts in the popular press of new developments in the field. Space permits the mention of only a few recent examples selected at random: progress in work being done on reading machines both visual and tactile; the program of the American Bankers Association in making its authoritative booklet *Personal Money Management* available in braille (consult your local bank or the ABA, 1120 Connecticut Ave., Washington, D.C. 20036); the braille and large type editions of *The ABC's of Careful Buying*, New York State's guidebook for consumers; the growing number of local radio stations which have instituted programs designed to be practically helpful to blind and handicapped listeners; among many.

• For a concise summary of aids for the visually handicapped, including optical aids, see Rose W. Fingeret's still useful "Aids for the Reader with Changing Vision," *ALA Bulletin*, October 1964, p. 792. (The entire issue, planned by Clara Lucioli of the Cleveland Public Library,

provides a valuable guide to library service to handicapped readers of many types.) Other sources of information concerning visual aids include the American Optometric Association, 7000 Chippewa St., St. Louis, Mo. 63119 (which also pioneered in large type exploration and evaluation); the New York Association for the Blind (The Lighthouse), 111 East 59th St., New York, N.Y. 10022; and the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, 79 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. And blind readers and their families will find much of interest, told in layman's language, in Edward Jablonski's "Man's Conquest of Blindness," *American Legion Magazine*, December 1965, p. 18.

• Many libraries will find it helpful to have on their shelves the basic *Directory of Agencies Serving the Visually Handicapped in the United States* (17th ed., 1971, $6),

Books for the Blind and Handicapped Know No Age Barrier

Photos: Cleveland Public Library, Free Library of Philadelphia, LC, Prince George's County Memorial Library

published by the American Foundation for the Blind, 15 W. 16th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011. Equally indispensable, and available, on request, from the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, is the periodically revised *Directory of Library Resources for the Blind and Physically Handicapped,* a quick and time-saving finding list of essential information concerning regional libraries for the blind and handicapped and machine lending agencies throughout the U.S. and its possessions.

How You Can Help

Large amounts of public money and vast expenditures of human effort and good will on many levels go into the national program of library service for the blind and handicapped. The key to the success of the program lies, of course, in reaching and informing those who are entitled to its benefits. It is here that you as a librarian, as an influential and informed leader in your community, can help.

In conclusion I should like to quote the last paragraph of my *Wilson Bulletin* article of 1932:

> The Pratt-Smoot law has placed library work with the blind on a new footing. Every branch of the service is in a position to advance and increase its usefulness in ways that have never been possible before. The general library can play its part in the new era by guiding and directing—by directing the blind to sources where help and pleasure await them.

Add the phrase "and physically handicapped"—and for all the progress that has been made in forty-odd years, the concluding words are just as true and even more urgent today than when they were first written. The opportunity is yours.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

NOTE—For reasons of space, not all publications mentioned in the foregoing text have been repeated here. Likewise the effort has been made in this selected listing to emphasize recent articles and publications for the most part. Numerous older references will be found in the preceding (3rd) edition of this brochure, available in most libraries.

Items below marked (*) may be obtained, on request, from the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. 20542.

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• *Talking Book Topics* (bimonthly).

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"What About Cassettes?" by Robert S. Bray. In *Talking Book Topics*, Sep.-Oct., Nov.-Dec. 1971; May-Jun. 1972.

"The World Will Never Be So Small Again: A Thanksgiving Story From a Blind Reader," by Robert Russell. In *Wilson Library Bulletin*, Nov. 1971.

Additional copies of this pamphlet may be obtained, on request, from the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20542

(Above) aerial view of main Library of Congress building and Annex

(Below) headquarters of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Taylor Street N.W. Washington, D.C. (LC photos)

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Eligible readers may receive any of these books or periodicals—and countless others—through the Library of Congress Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped program. They are books and magazines on record, books and magazines in braille, twin-vision books which have both print and braille interpaged, and books on cassette and open-reel tapes.